

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1(Currently Amended). A system for managing a product distribution channel having a plurality of channel participants, ~~the method~~ comprising:

one or more reference record databases;

one or more reference records within the reference record databases, each reference record providing an association between business information and spatial data for a specific channel participant;

transaction data related to at least one channel participant;

a candidate identification mechanism for ~~accessing~~ determining more than one candidate reference record from one of the reference record databases using spatial and business data derived from the transaction data; and

a matching mechanism for matching a subset of the candidate reference records to the transaction data.

2(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a consumer of the product who receives the product from the distribution channel.

3(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a producer of the product who places the product in the distribution channel.

4(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a distributor of the product who receives the product from a producer and distributes the product to a consumer.

5(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a reseller such as a dealer, agent, branch, and the like.

6(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism further comprises a geo-coding mechanism operable to determine street-level spatial data from the transaction data.

7(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism determines postal code information from the transaction data.

8(Original). The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism determines location information from the transaction data.

9(Original). The system of claim 6 wherein the candidate identification mechanism further comprises a selection mechanism for retrieving records that have spatial data substantially matching the spatial data obtained from the transaction record.

10(Original). The system of claim 9 wherein the reference record comprises:
a reference identifier identifying the channel participant;
a business name; and
spatial information with predetermined accuracy.

11(Original). The system of claim 10 wherein the predetermined accuracy is street-level accuracy.

12(Original). The system of claim 10 wherein the predetermined accuracy is postal accuracy.

13(Original). The system of claim 9 wherein the matching mechanism further comprises:

a lexical matching process operable to correlate non-spatial data in the transaction record with non-spatial data in the candidate reference records.

14(Original). The system of claim 9 wherein the matching mechanism further comprises:

a lexical matching process operable to correlate spatial data in the transaction record with spatial data in the candidate reference records.

15(Original). The system of claim 13 wherein the lexical matching process generates a score for each candidate reference record.

16(Original). The system of claim 15 further comprising:

a selection process operable to select a candidate reference record based on the generated score exceeding a pre-selected threshold value, wherein the selected candidate reference record provides a precise identification of the at least one channel participant related to the transaction data.

17(Original). The system of claim 16 wherein the selection process makes automated assignments to select candidates when the scores exceed a predetermined high threshold.

Claims 18-32(Cancelled).

33(Previously Presented). A method for identifying distribution channel participants comprising:

generating a transaction record comprising data that imprecisely identifies at least one channel participant;

geo-coding location data within the transaction record to determine a spatial identifier for the transaction record;

providing a reference record database comprising a plurality of reference records where each reference record comprises business information having greater precision than the transaction record and each record is associated with a spatial identifier; and

identifying more than one reference record in the reference record database by matching the spatial identifier of the transaction record with spatial identifiers associated with reference records.

34(Original). The method of claim 33 wherein the at least one channel participant is an end customer.

35(Previously Presented). The method of claim 33 further comprising:
applying non-spatial matching processes to select one of the reference records and using the selected reference record to precisely identify the at least one channel participant.

36(Original). The method of claim 33 further comprising:
using the one or more identified referenced records to attribute transactions to another channel participant, wherein the transaction record itself is has insufficient precision to accurately attribute the transactions.

Claims 37-39 (Cancelled).

40(Original). The system of claim 1 further comprising a learning database mechanism operable to hold records that create associations between information within transaction records that could not be automatically matched with reference records and the desired reference record so that subsequent transaction records can be matched with the desired reference records using the association provided by the learning database.

41(Original). The system of claim 40 wherein the learning database is populated based on analysis of transaction records that require manual intervention to be associated with the desired reference record.

42(New). A computer-based method for resolving ambiguous transaction records, comprising:

storing reference records in memory that each provide an association between business information and spatial data for a distribution channel participant, the spatial data including a geocode; and

with a resolver mechanism running on a computer having access to the memory, receiving a transaction record comprising transaction information and location information, wherein the transaction information includes an imprecise identification for one of the distribution channel participants associated with the stored reference records;

operating the resolver mechanism to parse the location information in the transaction record and generate a geocode based on the parsed location information;

comparing the generated geocode with the reference record geocodes to select one or more candidate reference records from the stored reference records;

performing lexical processing of the imprecise identification for one of the distribution channel participants with reference to the business information in the candidate reference records; and

based on the lexical processing, matching the received transaction record to one of the candidate reference records.

43(New). The method of claim 42, wherein the geocodes comprise a value corresponding to a latitude and longitude location.

44(New). The method of claim 42, further comprising providing in memory a learning library comprising a set of previously received imprecise channel participant identifications and a matched one of the stored reference records and wherein the method further comprises prior to the matching based on the lexical processing comparing the imprecise identification for one of the distribution channel participants with the set of previously received imprecise channel participant identifications and matching the received transaction record when a match between the identifications is determined.